

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PERES COMMENTS ON ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS

1. SUMMARY: I PAID ONE HOUR COURTESY CALL TODAY ON DEFMIN PERES. DISCUSSION CONCENTRATED ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE LATEST ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN PROPOSALS. MINISTER PERES EMPHASIZED THAT THE LATEST ISRAELI OFFER WAS THE FINAL ONE, AND THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT SADAT BE MADE TO REALIZE THIS. WHILE HE FELT THAT THE CHANCES FOR AN AGREEMENT WERE GOOD, PERES DREW A GRIM PICTURE OF THE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES SHOULD THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN. END SUMMARY.

2. DEFMIN BEGAN BY EXPRESSING HIS UNEASE OVER WHAT HE READS AS SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE WAY SADAT HAS BEEN TALKING RECENTLY. PERES UNDERSTANDS WHY SADAT MIGHT BE IMPATIENT WITH THE PACE OF NEGOTIATIONS BUT HE BELIEVES THAT IMPATIENCE SHOULD NOT INFLUENCE DECISIONS ON ISSUES AS IMPORTANT AS THE PRESENCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORCE. HE HOPES SADAT'S RECENT TONE IS ONLY A POSTURE ADOPTED FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES AND DOES NOT REPRESENT A PERMANENT SHIFT. IN REPLY TO A DIRECT QUESTION PERES STATED THAT HE BELIEVED SADAT HAS BEEN BEHAVING POLITELY IN THE INTERESTS OF A LONG-RANGE STRATEGY, BUT THAT NOW HE IS GETTING TIRED AND HIS BASIC MANNERS HAVE RETURNED TO THE SURFACE.

3. DEFMIN PERES WAS PARTICULARLY DISPLEASED BY THE LATEST
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EGYPTIAN MAP, WHICH HE FEELS IS NOT IN ANY SENSE A REALISTIC

PROPOSAL. ISRAEL, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD TRIED TO TAKE EGYPT'S NEEDS INTO ACCOUNT IN PREPARING ITS LATEST PROPOSAL. PERES CALLED EGYPT'S LATEST MAP OUTRAGEOUS (HE PRODUCED A COPY) AND REFERRED TO IT AS AN EXAGGERATION OF THE OSTPOLITIK OF EGYPT. IT INCLUDED TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL EAST OF THE MOUNTAINS, FOUR EGYPTIAN STATIONS EAST OF THE CANAL, MOVEMENT OF LINE B SOME TEN KILIMETERS TO THE EAST, AND THE DIVERSION OF TWO SEGMENTS OF ROAD IN LONG LOOPS TO THE EAST TO AVOID THE EXISTENCE OF PARALLEL STRETCHES OF ROAD ALONG THE GULF. SUCH A DEPLOYMENT ACCORDING TO PERES, WOULD CLEARLY BE ONE THAT ENCOURAGED FUTURE EGYPTIAN BELLIGERENCY. HOW COULD EGYPT EXPECT ISRAEL TO ACCEPT A LINE THAT WOULD AID A BELLIGERENT EGYPTIAN STANCE IF EGYPT WILL NOT AGREE TO A STATEMENT OF NON-BELLIGERENCY.

4. ISRAEL, FOR HER PART, BELIEVES THAT HER LATEST OFFER IS QUITE CLOSE TO THE IDEAS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER. THE SECRETARY, HOWEVER, SEEMS INCLINED TO GIVE A MORE POSITIVE INTERPRETATION TO SADAT'S LATEST STATEMENTS THAN DOES ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS ALSO NOT SURE THAT ITS LATEST PROPOSAL WAS READ CORRECTLY BY EGYPT. ISRAEL HAD OFFERED THE BEST IT CAN, AND THE LAST OFFER WAS A FINAL ONE. IN BONN THE SECY HAD ASKED ISRAEL TO COME UP WITH A FINAL POSITION, AND THIS IS WHAT ISRAEL HAD DONE. PERES BELIEVES THAT THE U.S. AND ISRAELI POSITIONS ARE NOW AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE. THE KEY ELEMENT NOW IS THAT SADAT IS MADE FULLY AWARE BY THE U.S. THAT THIS IS THE FINAL ISRAELI PROPOSAL. ISRAEL HAS REACHED THE LIMITS OF WHAT IT CAN OFFER FROM A NATIONAL SECURITY POINT OF VIEW. THE LATEST ISRAELI PROPOSAL WAS DRAWN NOT FOR PUBLIC OPINION BUT FOR REAL MILITARY SECURITY REASONS. IF THERE IS A BREAKDOWN, THERE WILL BE BITTERNESS AND INCREASED TENSION.

5. ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR A SETTLEMENT, THE DEFMIN CALLED ATTENTION TO A RECENT PRESS (AP) STORY THAT EGYPT WOULD AGREE TO FOUR U.S. STATIONS INSTEAD OF SIX. IF TRUE, AND PERES SAID HE WOULD TEND TO CREDIT THE STORY THIS WOULD REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT FROM A DISCUSSION OF PRINCIPLE TO A QUESTION OF NUMBERS, THEREBY IMPLYING AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF A U.S. PRESENCE. ISRAEL EXPECTS TO LEARN EGYPT'S REACTION TO ITS PROPOSAL BY

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AUG 5. IF THE EGYPTIAN REACTION IS POSITIVE, PERES BELIEVES THERE CAN BE PROMPT MOVEMENT TO AN AGREEMENT.

6. ISRAEL WANTS A RESPONSIBLE POWER (A LEGAL PRESENCE NOT A PROTECTIVE POWER) IN THE BUFFER ZONE. PERES BELIEVES THIS WILL BE OF ADVANTAGE TO SADAT IN THAT IT GIVES HIM A GOOD EXCUSE FOR NOT ACTING AGGRESSIVELY AND A GOOD EXCUSE FOR GRANTING AN AGREEMENT A REASONABLE LIFE EXPECTANCY. NOTING

THAT SADAT HAD ACCEPTED A UNANIMOUS CALL FOR HIM TO SERVE A SECOND TERM, PERES COMMENTED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT SADAT FACED ANY MAJOR DOMESTIC PRESSURE. HE THEREFORE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT. THE MONTH OF AUGUST WOULD BE CRUCIAL FOR SADAT, PERHAPS THE MOST CRUCIAL MONTH FOR AN EGYPTIAN RULER SINCE 1952.

7. I REMARKED THAT IT IS BECAUSE OF THE CRUCIAL NATURE OF THE SITUATION THAT THE U.S. BELIEVED IT IS WORTH DOING A LITTLE MORE IN ORDER TO KEEP SADAT IN OFFICE. NO OTHER MODERATE LEADER WAS PERCEIVED ON THE SCENE. PERES AGREED, BUT STATED THAT ISRAEL HAD GIVEN HIM ENOUGH ALREADY. I REPLIED THAT ONLY IN ITS LAST PROPOSAL DID ISRAEL OFFER ENOUGH, NOT BEFORE.

8. COMMENT: I WOULD APPRECIATE REPORT OF CURRENT STATE OF PLAY ON INTERIM AGREEMENT, TOGETHER WITH OUR ASSESSMENT OF MEANING OF RECENT SADAT MOVES AND STATEMENTS. DEPT., I'M SURE, AGREES THAT ISRAELI REPORTS AND VIEWS ARE NOT ALWAYS THE MOST OBJECTIVE AND RELIABLE.
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